



Administrative Furlough Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following guidance on administrative furloughs is provided for managers, supervisors, and employees.

(22 May 2013) Summary of Changes: (1) Added section on Overtime, Comp Time and Credit Hours on Questions 10a & 10b; (2) Adds DoD guidance regarding employees working uncommon tours of duty (e.g. firefighters) on Question 14; (3) Clarifies substitution of LWOP for furlough time on Questions 29-30; (5) Adds information regarding personnel security to Question 58.

General

1. What is furlough?

A furlough is the placing of an employee in a temporary non-duty, non-pay status. Employees are not paid and may not perform work during furlough.

2. What is an administrative furlough?

An administrative furlough is a planned event by the Department of Air Force which is designed to absorb reductions necessitated by downsizing, reduced funding, lack of work, or any other budget situation. This type of furlough is typically a non-emergency furlough in that the Air Force has sufficient time to reduce spending and give adequate notice to employees of its specific furlough plan and how many furlough days will be required.

3. Why is furlough necessary?

Administrative furlough is necessitated by the extraordinary and serious budgetary challenges facing the Department of Air Force for the remainder of the fiscal year 2013, the most serious of which is sequestration scheduled to begin on March 1, 2013. The Budget Control Act of 2011, as amended by the America Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, makes across-the-board reductions to budgetary resources for the Federal government (i.e., sequester resources). The Department of Air Force must and will protect wartime operations funding for our troops in harm's way. This inevitably means larger cuts in base-budget funding for the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) accounts, thus the Department of Air Force will need funding in other accounts that can be used to provide the warfighters with what they need to protect national security.

Covered Employees

4. Which employees may be affected by an administrative furlough?

In an administrative furlough necessitated by sequestration, virtually all employees will be furloughed. There will be only a very few exceptions, such as those necessary to provide safety of life or property, but only to the minimum extent needed to protect life or property. The

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mission-criticality of the employee's work is not relevant to whether he or she can be furloughed. Mission-critical employees *will* be furloughed. If an office is properly manned, furlough should be manageable through proper scheduling – just like leave or an alternate work schedule. Only where staggering absence is not possible – such as for deployed civilians – is an exception truly essential. Thus, if an individual can take leave or participate in a compressed work schedule, they can be furloughed.

5. How will employees be notified whether they are affected by an administrative furlough?

The Air Force will determine the method and timing of notifying employees of whether they are affected by an administrative furlough, subject to applicable laws, regulations and collective bargaining agreements. As a general matter, employees will be provided at least 30 days notification for an administrative furlough scheduled for 22 workdays or less.

6. Who should employees contact for information about whether they may be furloughed?

Employees should first contact their supervisors for information about whether furlough will impact them. Employees can contact the Civilian Personnel Section for information about how furlough will impact pay and benefits. Bargaining unit employees may also contact their union representatives concerning local collective bargaining agreements covering implementation of furlough.

7. Are detailed employees returned to a permanent position before being furloughed?

Detailed employees may remain in their temporary detail assignment, but remain officially assigned to their permanent positions. During a furlough, management will determine the status of their employees on detail within the Air Force or to another agency.

8. Does furlough affect my service computation date? Am I separated from service?

No, employees who are furloughed are not separated from Federal service. They are placed in a temporary non-duty, non-pay status. Furlough does not generally impact the service computation date unless combined with consecutive periods of leave without pay of more than six months.

Working during Furlough

9. May an employee volunteer to do his or her job on a non-pay basis during any hours or days designated as furlough time off?

No. Employees are legally prohibited from performing work or acting as an unpaid volunteer. This includes coming to work, telework, attending training, using their Air Force issued laptops, or checking e-mail or Blackberries while on furlough. Working during furlough time off violates Federal law and may result in disciplinary action against supervisors and employees.

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Overtime, Compensatory time, Credit hours

10a. During furlough, may an employee work overtime?

Consistent with the USECAF and AF/CV memo, dated 28 Feb 2013, except in highly limited circumstances, supervisors will not approve work in excess of employees' normal duty day.

Premium pay is not authorized during the furlough timeframe (8 July – 30 Sep) unless it is part of normal pay (such as an employee who regularly earns night shift differential). Beyond that, premium pay is only authorized when it is necessary to provide safety of life or property, but only to the minimum extent needed to protect life or property (i.e. firemen or emergency responders working over their regular shift due to an emergent situation that arises on their shift).

10b. May an employee work earn credit hours during furlough?

Consistent with A1 FM Memo, dated 10 May 13, managers may approve credit hours if used in the same period so that employees are not working above and beyond normal duty hours.

Employee Training during Furlough

11. What happens to employees scheduled for training during an administrative furlough?

Employees participating in short-term or long-term training are subject to furlough unless specifically excepted. In the event that scheduled training occurs during a furlough period, affected employees must be placed in a furlough status and ordered not to attend the scheduled training or perform course work during the hours/days they are on furlough.

Supervisors, course directors and instructors should schedule students' furlough time off to minimize impact to class participation. For example, a student in short-term training may choose to re-schedule a furlough day earlier or later in the pay period to attend a five day course without interruption. A student in long-term training might be furloughed during hours normally designated as study time or other school activities that will not affect learning and program participation during the week. But employees may not perform work of benefit to the Air Force during the hours/days that they are on furlough.

Scheduling Furlough

12. How should supervisors schedule administrative furlough time off? Must all supervisors follow the same procedures for furloughing employees?

Within each pay period, supervisors have discretion to schedule work days and furlough days or hours, subject to any locally negotiated procedures for bargaining unit employees. Management will need to stagger employee furlough days so as to maximize mission continuity. Employees may request a specific schedule for furlough time off subject to management approval based upon mission and workload considerations. Generally, full-time employees working a standard work schedule will be expected to have 2 furlough days (16 hours) per pay period.

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13. How should supervisors schedule administrative furlough time off for employees on flexible or compressed work schedules under an alternative work schedule (AWS) program?

Supervisors may require alternative work schedules be modified or suspended due to mission needs during the administrative furlough, subject to locally developed policy or negotiated procedures. The need to maximize mission continuity will frequently lead to suspension of AWS. Talk with your supervisor about your work schedule and reporting expectations.

14. How should supervisors schedule administrative furlough time off for employees who do not work a standard work schedule (e.g., part-time or uncommon tour of duty)?

To ensure that all furloughed employees are treated equitably in the Department of Defense, furlough hours for employees with an uncommon tour will be set to achieve the same percentage pay reduction experienced by 80-hour biweekly full-time employees. The reduction in firefighter regular pay as a result of furlough may not exceed 20% per pay period.

OPM's Guidance on Administrative Furloughs points out that, for employees with uncommon tours of duty (e.g., firefighters or paramedics), furloughing overtime hours reduces pay more (expressed as a percentage of pay) than the reduction in hours expressed as a percentage of hours. For an employee with a 144-hour biweekly tour, a 20% reduction in hours (28.8 furlough hours) reduces pay by 26.5% due to the loss of overtime pay. For an employee with an 80-hour biweekly tour, a 20% reduction in hours (16 furlough hours) reduces regular pay by 20%.

Consistent with DoD guidance, summarized in the DoD Frequently Asked Questions, 2013, overtime hours will become furlough hours only to the extent necessary to achieve the same percentage pay reduction experienced by 80-hour biweekly full-time employees.

For example, a GS-6, step 5, firefighter in the Washington, DC area on a 144-hour biweekly schedule has an annual rate of basic pay of \$43,046. His firefighter hourly rate of pay is \$15.62 (\$43,046/2756*). Overtime pay applies to hours beyond the 106-hour biweekly overtime threshold.

Basic Pay \$1655.72 (\$15.62 x 106 non-overtime hours)
Overtime Pay \$890.34 (\$15.62 x 1.5 = \$23.43 x 38 overtime hours)
Total Pay \$2546.06
20% Furlough Savings \$509.21 (\$2546.06 x .20)

Overtime Furlough Hours 21.73 or 21 hours and 45 minutes (\$509.21/\$23.43)

*The 2756-hour factor is the number of non-overtime hours in a year for full-time firefighters. It is derived by multiplying the number of weeks in the year (52) by the FLSA weekly overtime standard for firefighters (53 hours).

NOTE: The above illustration is for a firefighter with a 144-hour schedule. The hours and computations will vary based on the firefighter work schedule.

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15. How should supervisors schedule administrative furlough time off for employees who work on a seasonal or intermittent basis?

The organization determines whether seasonal or intermittent employees are called for work based on mission needs. Such employees are subject to furlough while in a pay status. Furlough time off is subject to supervisor approval in accordance with established procedures.

16. Can I telework during discontinuous furlough?

Yes, employees may continue to telework on regularly scheduled telework days as long as they are not scheduled furlough days. Supervisors may require telework agreements be modified or suspended due to mission needs during the administrative furlough. Talk with your supervisor about your work schedule and reporting expectations.

Designation of Furlough Days

17. Can I choose to take my furlough days all at once or spread them out?

The Air Force elects to implement administrative furlough as discontinuous. This means furlough days or hours are spread out over the maximum pay periods to mitigate negative financial and personal impact to employees. For example, employees are furloughed 2 work days, or 16 hours per pay period, for 7 pay periods, instead of 14 consecutive work days. Employees may request a specific schedule for furlough time off subject to management approval based upon mission and workload considerations. For employees represented by labor unions, furlough scheduling may be addressed in the collective bargaining agreement.

18. Can employees be furloughed for half days?

Yes. Supervisors have discretion to schedule an administrative furlough in a variety of ways. Supervisors should take into account the effect of commuting when multiple partial furlough days are scheduled.

Civilian Pay

19. Are furloughed employees entitled to severance pay?

No. Because furloughed employees are not separated from Federal service, they are not entitled to severance pay.

20. May employees take other jobs while on furlough?

While on furlough time off, an individual remains an employee of the Federal Government. Therefore, executive branch-wide standards of ethical conduct and rules regarding outside employment continue to apply when an individual is furloughed (specifically, the executive branch-wide standards of ethical conduct, at 5 CFR Part 2635). In addition, there are specific statutes that prohibit certain outside activities. Consistent with the requirements of the *Joint Ethics Regulation*, Air Force employees are required to report any outside employment or business activity to their supervisors or other locally designated official *prior to* engaging in employment or business activity. Supervisors have the authority to prohibit any outside employment or business activity that might detract from readiness or pose a security risk. Approval to participate in outside employment or business activity will be documented by supervisors on AF Form 971, *Supervisor's Employee Brief*. Employees required to file financial disclosure reports, SF 450 or *This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.*

SF 278, and those serving as procurement officials, are subject to additional restrictions regarding outside employment and business activities. Employees should address specific questions to their local ethics counselors at servicing legal offices.

21. Are employees entitled to unemployment compensation while on furlough?

It is possible that furloughed employees may become eligible for unemployment compensation. Unemployment compensation programs are managed by State governments and requirements differ by State. See the Department of Labor website “Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees” at <http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/unemcomp.asp>).

22. May agencies deny or delay within-grade or step increases for General Schedule and Federal Wage System employees during a furlough?

It depends on the length of the furlough. Within-grade and step increases for General Schedule (GS) and Federal Wage System employees are awarded on the basis of length of service and individual performance. Such increases may not be denied or delayed solely because of lack of funds. However, extended periods of non-pay status may affect the timing of such increases. For example, a GS employee in steps 1, 2, or 3 of the grade who is furloughed an aggregate of more than 2 workweeks during the waiting period would have his or her within-grade increase delayed by at least a full pay period.

23. What will happen to my allotments if I am furloughed?

Allotments will continue unless there is insufficient pay to cover total amount(s). If allotments are discontinued, DFAS will not notify the recipients of missed payments. Employees are encouraged to review Leave and Earning Statements each pay period during Administrative Furlough to ensure allotments are being made. Visit the DFAS website at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> to review and/or update automatic allotments.

24. When an employee’s pay is insufficient to permit all deductions to be made because furlough time off occurs in the middle of a pay period and the employee receives a partial paycheck, what is the order of withholding precedence?

As long as an employee continues to have sufficient salary in their paycheck to cover the employee premium, coverage continues. If the distribution of furlough days results in a pay period in which the employee is in a non-pay status for the entire pay period, their coverage will also continue as long as the non-pay status does not exceed 365 days. If an employee has insufficient pay to cover their FEHB premium during the furlough period due to reduced days in a pay status, they will be offered the choice of incurring a debt, termination of their insurance coverage, or making direct payments to the payroll office. The employee will have 31 days to respond to an employee notice before the insurance is terminated for failure to respond. An employee who elects to terminate their FEHB during the period of insufficient funds will have 60 days to re-enroll. Contact your Civilian Personnel Section for specific guidance.

Allowances, Per Diem, and PCS Entitlements

25. Will administrative furlough impact my Living Quarters Allowance (LQA)?

No. Employees entitled to LQA will continue receiving benefits.

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

26. Will administrative furlough impact my PCS entitlements?

Generally, no, furlough status would not impact PCS entitlements unless a furlough day is scheduled on the scheduled report for duty day. This would delay the start and end dates for certain PCS allowance time limits, such as, but not limited to, dependent travel, HHG transportation, and real estate transactions. Management should not furlough employees on or around entry on duty dates (EOD). For example, if an employee is expected to report on Monday, he or she should not be furlough for that day in lieu of administrative leave. The employee should report to work to establish certain PCS allowance entitlements.

27. Will Air Force cover travel expenses, including per diem, during a furlough day, if my status requires my stay include a furlough day?

Yes. The Air Force must provide per diem or actual expenses to employees whose travel status requires a stay that includes a furlough day. Your furlough status does not impact per diem entitlements with the following exceptions:

- a. Your furlough day (non-workday) is in conjunction with leave. An employee is not authorized per diem for a non-workday when leave is taken for the whole workday before and the whole workday following the non-workday. Additionally, an employee is authorized per diem for not more than two non-workdays if leave is taken for all workdays between the non-workdays.
- b. You return to your Permanent Duty Station while in furlough status (thereby ending your entitlement to per diem). An employee who returns home on a furlough day from TDY will not receive per diem that day, but will still be reimbursed for travel. In general, however, travel should occur during duty status days.

Contact your Civilian Personnel Section or Travel Pay Office for additional information on civilian travel entitlements.

Leave and Other Time Off

28. May an employee take paid leave or other forms of paid time off (e.g., annual, sick, court, or military leave, leave for bone marrow or organ donor leave, credit hours earned, any compensatory time off earned, or time off awards) instead of taking administrative furlough time off?

No. During an administrative furlough, an employee may not substitute paid leave or other forms of paid time off for any hours or days designated as furlough time off.

29. May an employee take leave without pay (LWOP) during an administrative furlough period?

Yes, an employee may take LWOP for many reasons, including uniformed service, family medical leave (FMLA), or to accompany a military spouse. However, during administrative furlough, management should limit approval of discretionary LWOP except in cases of emergency.

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

30. Are employees on leave without pay (LWOP) affected by administrative furlough?

Consistent with OASD (R&FM) memo, dated 21 May 13, employees who are in LWOP status during the administration furlough (8 July – 21 September) will receive credit for their time in that status towards any remaining scheduled furlough hours.

LWOP taken prior to or after the administrative furlough will not be credited toward required furlough time. During an administrative furlough, employees issued furlough notices will be subject to furlough time until an approved period of LWOP begins.

Supervisors are responsible for certifying time and attendance records, and tracking the number of LWOP hours credited for furlough hours.

Examples:

- (1) An employee returns from LWOP, Absent-Uniformed Service Leave (A-US), to a paid status in a non-excepted position on 14 July 2013. His timecard is annotated as LWOP-US and he is credited for 40 hours furlough (8-12 July) requirement. He is issued a furlough notice and may then be required to take up to 48 furlough hours through the remaining furlough timeframe, generally, 16 hours per pay period.
- (2) An employee in a non-excepted position is scheduled to begin LWOP on 28 Jul 13 to accompany his military spouse to her next assignment. He is issued a furlough notice and may be subject to furlough, generally 16 hours per pay period, until his approved period of LWOP begins. After 28 Jul 13, any remaining furlough requirement (up to 88 hours) is credited with LWOP.
- (3) An employee returns from LWOP under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to a paid status in a non-excepted position on 11 August 2013. She is credited for 88 hours furlough, and therefore, not required to take any furlough hours.
- (4) An employee in a non-excepted position takes one day of LWOP, once a month, during the furlough time frame. He is issued a furlough notice for up to 88 hours from 8 July to 21 Sep 13. His supervisors credits his LWOP hours towards his furlough requirement as they are taken. By 21 Sep 13, his intermittent LWOP (24 hours) reduced his total furlough requirement to 64 hours.

31. How will furlough time off affect an employee's leave accrual and benefits?

During furlough, the accumulation of non-pay status hours can affect the accrual of annual leave and sick leave. For example, when a full-time employee with an 80-hour biweekly tour of duty accumulates a total of 80 hours of non-pay status from the beginning of the leave year (either in one pay period, or over the course of several pay periods), the employee will not earn annual and sick leave in the pay period in which that 80-hour accumulation is reached. (See 5 CFR 630.208(a).) In other words, if an employee is furloughed for 176 hours (22 days), he or she will lose 2 pay periods worth of annual leave and sick leave accrual.

Generally, furlough time off is treated like regular leave without pay (LWOP) for benefit purposes. Detailed guidance can be found on the myPers website under Civilian Employee, Benefits and Entitlements, Nonmilitary Leave Without Pay

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(https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/23534/) for information on the effect of extended LWOP or other non-pay status on Federal benefits and programs.

32. What happens if my scheduled and approved annual leave is cancelled or my supervisor disapproves my annual leave request during the furlough period?

Annual leave which would otherwise be forfeited (also referred to as use-or-lose leave) may be restored when it is lost because of exigencies of the service or sickness of the employee, if use of the leave was scheduled in advance. (See AFI 36-815, Para. 2.10) A period of administrative furlough, such as furlough directed as a result of sequestration, would be considered an exigency of the service for purposes of annual leave restoration. Supervisors and managers shall document disapproved or cancelled leave during the furlough period and make every effort to reschedule requested annual leave by the end of the leave year (NLT 11Jan14).

Before forfeited annual leave may be considered for restoration, use of the annual leave must have been requested, approved, and scheduled in writing before the start of the third biweekly pay period before the end of the leave year. Also, before forfeited annual leave is restored, there must be a determination that an exigency is of major importance and that an employee may not use scheduled annual leave. An Installation Commander, his designee, or head of serviced organization may determine an exigency for purposes of leave restoration.

Normally, approval of an exigency is required in advance of cancellation of leave. In the event of an emergency, this determination must be made as soon after the occurrence of the emergency as possible. As soon as it is known that leave will be canceled and forfeiture will be unavoidable, the supervisor initiates a letter to the designated official explaining the exigency, and requesting approval to cancel the scheduled leave. The supervisor coordinates the letter with the Civilian Personnel Section to ensure that the conditions for restoration in governing directives are met, and that documentation to support the request is sufficient.

Promptly after the leave year ends, the employee should submit a request for restoration of leave with the approval of exigency attached, stating the actual number of hours lost on specific dates that could not be rescheduled, and then forwards it through the supervisor for endorsement to the CPS. The CPS will review the request and upon determination that the documentation is adequate, will endorse it to the civilian payroll office which, in turn, sends it to DFAS for establishment of a Restored Annual Leave Account, with a copy to the employee.

33. Will retirement calculations be affected?

Retirement annuity benefits under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) are generally not impacted during an Administrative Furlough of 30 days or less. Both FERS and CSRS retirements are based on an employee's high-three average pay and their years of creditable service. Both CSRS and FERS allow service credit for up to 6 months of nonpay status in any calendar year. Therefore, furlough days of 30 days or less do not affect an employee's creditable service for retirement purposes.

34. Will high-three salary calculation for retirement be affected?

No, there is no effect on the high-three average pay unless the furlough causes the employee to be in a non-pay status (which includes furlough, leave without pay, absence without leave, and suspension) for more than six months during the calendar year.

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

35. For an employee covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), is the government's contribution based on a person's established salary or what the employee actually earns during a pay period?

Agency Automatic Contributions (1 percent) are calculated based on the employee's basic pay earned during each pay period. Agency Matching Contributions are calculated based on employee contributions from that basic pay. Consequently, if an employee is not earning basic pay for a particular pay period, he or she will not receive either type of agency contribution for that pay period.

36. Will the government's contribution to the retirement fund affect an employee's retirement calculation?

An aggregate non-pay status (which includes furlough, leave without pay, absence without leave, and suspension) of six months in any calendar year is creditable service. Coverage continues at no cost to the employee while in a non-pay status.

Holidays

37. May employees be administratively furloughed on a holiday?

Yes. An employee may request to be furloughed for periods of time that include holidays. However, supervisors should select furlough days off for reasons that are unrelated to the fact that the period includes a holiday. For example, a supervisor may not furlough employees for a 3-day period, the middle of which is a holiday, for the sole purpose of saving 3 days' pay while losing only 2 days of work. Neither would it be proper to furlough an employee solely on a holiday.

38. If employees have a designated administrative furlough day off on the last workday before a holiday or the first workday after a holiday (but not on both days), will they be paid for the holiday?

Yes. The general rule is that an employee is entitled to pay for a holiday so long as he or she is in a pay status on either the workday preceding a holiday or the workday following a holiday. The employee is paid for the holiday based on the presumption that, but for the holiday, the employee would have worked.

39. If employees have a designated administrative furlough day off on the last workday before a holiday and the first workday after a holiday, will they be paid for the holiday?

No. If a furlough includes both the last workday before the holiday and the first workday after the holiday, the employee is not entitled to pay for the holiday because there is no longer a presumption that, but for the holiday, the employee would have worked on that day. (See Comptroller General opinion B-224619, August 17, 1987.) Agencies that allow employees to choose their furlough days off should explain that the employee will not be paid for the holiday if the employee chooses to take a furlough day off both before and after the holiday.

Benefits

40. Will an employee continue to be covered under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program during an administrative furlough?

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

During administrative furlough, the Air Force continues to be responsible for agency contributions to FEHB and each employee remains responsible for his or her employee contribution. The employee's FEHB coverage will continue if the employee's salary is sufficient to pay the premiums. If the employee's salary becomes insufficient to pay FEHB premiums due to the furlough, the leave without pay/insufficient pay rules apply. Detailed guidance can be found on the myPers website under Civilian Employee, Benefits and Entitlements, Nonmilitary Leave Without Pay (https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/23534/) for information on the effect of extended LWOP or other non-pay status on Federal benefits and programs.

If the employee chooses to remain covered, he or she may continue paying premiums outside of payroll deductions or incur a debt. If the employee chooses to delay payment, FEHB premiums will accumulate and be withheld from pay upon the employee's pay becoming sufficient to cover the premiums.

Additional information can be found on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) website at: [http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/reference-materials/reference/leave-without-pay-status-and-insufficient-pay/#You Must Pay the Employee Share](http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/reference-materials/reference/leave-without-pay-status-and-insufficient-pay/#You_Must_Pay_the_Employee_Share)

41. Will an employee's Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS) be impacted during an administrative furlough?

The employee's FSAFEDS coverage continues, and allotments made by the employee continue if the employee's salary in each pay period is sufficient to cover the deduction(s). If the employee's salary is insufficient to cover his or her allotment(s), then incurred eligible health care expenses will not be reimbursed until the allotments are successfully restarted (in which case the remaining allotments would be recalculated over the remaining pay periods to match the employee's annual election amount). Incurred eligible dependent care expenses may be reimbursed up to whatever balance is in the employee's dependent care account, as long as the expenses incurred allow the employee (or employee's spouse if married) to work, look for work or attend school full-time. Once dependent care allotments are successfully restarted, remaining allotments would be recalculated over the remaining pay periods to match the employee's annual election amount.

42. Will an employee continue to be covered under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) during an administrative furlough?

If the furlough is for only part of a pay period (ex. 2 work days per pay period), FEGLI premiums are required. If there is any pay in a pay period, FEGLI premiums for the whole pay period will be deducted from pay. The premiums are not prorated. If the employee's salary becomes insufficient to pay FEGLI premiums due to the furlough, the leave without pay/insufficient pay rules apply. Detailed guidance can be found on the myPers website under Civilian Employee, Benefits and Entitlements, Nonmilitary Leave Without Pay (https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/23534/) for information on the effect of extended LWOP or other non-pay status on Federal benefits and programs.

43. Will an employee continue to be covered under the Federal Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) during an administrative furlough?

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Yes. If BENEFEDS is unable to take the necessary premium deduction from an employee's pay, BENEFEDS collects premium up to twice the biweekly amount from the next full pay period to make up for the missed premium deduction. If the furlough continues for more than two consecutive pay periods, BENEFEDS will mail a direct bill to the employee. The enrollee should pay premiums directly billed to him/her on a timely basis to ensure continuation of coverage.

44. Will an employee continue to be covered under the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) during an administrative furlough?

Yes, eligible claims will continue to be paid. Coverage will terminate if premiums are not paid. If the contractor does not receive premium for two or fewer pay periods, they will adjust future premium deductions, increasing by no more than \$50 per pay period to recover the missed premiums. Three consecutive pay periods of no premium will result in the contractor billing the participant directly. The employee also has the option to change to direct billing or to payment via electronic funds transfer (EFT). If premiums are not collected or a final bill is not paid within a 30 day grace period, FLTCP will send a termination letter. The employee has 35 days from the date of the letter to pay the premium outside of payroll deductions; otherwise the employee will be disenrolled retroactively to the last pay period in which premium was paid.

45. Are employees who are injured while on furlough eligible to receive workers compensation?

No. Workers compensation is paid to employees only if they are injured while performing their duties. Employees on furlough are not in a duty status for this purpose. An employee who is receiving workers' compensation payments will continue to receive workers' compensation payments during a furlough and will continue to be charged LWOP.

46. Will furlough affect contributions to my civilian Thrift Savings Account (TSP)?

Employees will experience a reduction in their TSP contributions where their contributions are based on a percent (%) of pay. Employees will also experience a reduction in agency automatic (1%) contributions and may experience a reduction in employer matching contributions, depending on the amount that the employee contributes.

The Thrift Board published a fact sheet (Link: <https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/oc13-7.pdf>) addressing some of the questions you may have about your TSP contributions if you are furloughed as a result of sequestration. It also details alternatives for accessing your TSP funds should you face financial hardship as a result of being furloughed.

Federal Employees on Military Duty

47. Will employees continue to receive a reservist differential payment (5 U.S.C. 5538) if they are affected by an administrative furlough from their Federal civilian position while on active duty?

It depends. In computing a reservist differential, the Air Force must compare the employee's projected civilian basic pay to the allocated military pay and allowances for each civilian pay period. If an employee is affected by a furlough from his or her Federal position while on active duty, the Air Force must reduce the employee's projected civilian basic pay during any pay
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period in which furlough time off occurs. If the allocated military pay and allowances are greater than or equal to the projected civilian basic pay adjusted for furlough time off, no reservist differential is payable for that pay period. If the projected civilian basic pay (as reduced to account for furlough time off) is greater than the allocated military pay and allowances, the difference represents the unadjusted reservist differential.

48. Will there be an impact on an employee's General Schedule or Federal Wage System within-grade increases (WGI) waiting period if the employee is affected by an administrative furlough while in an Absent – Uniformed Service status?

No. A furlough has no impact on an employee's General Schedule or Federal Wage System WGI waiting period if the employee is affected by a furlough while in an Absent – Uniformed Service status (i.e., called to active duty). An absence for the purpose of engaging in military service is creditable service in the computation of waiting periods for successive WGIs when an employee returns to a pay status through the exercise of a restoration right provided by law, Executive Order, or regulation.

49. Can Air Reserve Technicians (ARTs) or Non-ART Air Force Reservists perform military duty on days they are furloughed from their civilian position?

Yes. ARTs and Non-ART civilians who are also Air Force Reservists may be placed in a military status while furloughed (non-pay status), subject to normal regulatory and local funding availability limitations. However, depending on availability, not all furlough days may be mitigated in this manner. Commanders are responsible for judicious use of Traditional Reservists (TR) to perform duties to continue missions in the absence of furloughed civilian employees. Any TR volunteer (including ART, non-ART civilian employee, or TRs) may be used for this purpose, but use of Annual Tour and IDT must be consistent with their training purpose and governing instructions. Additionally, duties performed must be consistent with the TR's normally assigned military duties. As a reminder, these individuals remain in a non-pay status while furloughed in their civilian positions and may not use military leave or other types of paid time off concurrent with military service.

Documentation

50. How is time on a furlough documented?

Standard Form-50 (SF-50), "Notification of Personnel Action," must be prepared for each individual subject to furlough.

Furlough hours will also appear on the Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) on its own line in the LEAVE section of the LES. FURLOUGH will appear in the TYPE column and the hours will appear in the USED PAY PD column.

Employee Assistance

51. What resources are available if an employee needs assistance during a furlough period?

Contact your Civilian Personnel Section for information on local employee assistance programs or local community resources to assist employees during the furlough period. Some employee

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

assistance programs (EAP) include limited counseling services. Bargaining unit employees may also contact their union representatives.

Unemployment Compensation (UC)

52. What address should the Civilian Personnel Office provide on the SF-8, Notice to Federal Employee about Unemployment Insurance? What is the Federal Identification Code (FIC)?

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AFPC/DPIEPC UCFE
550 C St West, Ste 57
JBSA Randolph TX 78150-4759
The FIC code for appropriated fund employees is 424.

53. Are furloughed employees stationed overseas eligible to file for Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits?

No. Overseas employees are not eligible to file for UC benefits unless they return to the United States (U.S.). Their UC claim would then be based on their state of residence.

54. Could an overseas employee file a retroactive claim when they return to the U.S. at the end of their tour of duty in two years?

No. None of the State Employment Security Agencies (SESA) would backdate a claim two years. If an UC claim was filed at that time, the claim would be effective when it was filed and not retroactive to the time of the furlough.

55. Is the UC claim based on the state where the employee lives, or where they work?

UC claims are based on the state in which the work was performed (this does not include overseas employees).

56. Are employees who are lower than a Grade 9, Step 5, exempt from paying back UC benefits if they are later paid for the furlough period?

The decision on whether or not employees would have to pay back UC benefits would be decided by each State Employment Security Agencies based on their UC law. Overpayment requirements apply to all employees for a particular state, regardless of their grade or salary.

57. Is information available as to what the states require before processing a claim for unemployment because of a furlough?

Yes. The list below gives Web sites or instructions for each state when filing an initial claim for unemployment; different procedures often apply when filing claims for additional benefits.

Alabama – <http://dir.alabama.gov/uc>

Alaska – http://www.labor.state.ak.us/esd_unemployment_insurance/biff-splash.htm

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Administrative Furlough Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Arizona – <https://www.azdes.gov/landing.aspx?id=4211>
Arkansas – <http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/UI/index.htm>
California – <https://eapply4ui.edd.ca.gov/>
Colorado –
<https://www.coworkforce.com/ucontinuedclaims/default.asp?ci=0&ps=0&er=0&li=e>
Connecticut – <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/progsupt/unemplt/M1A/LogInIntro.htm>
Delaware – <http://www.delawareworks.com/Unemployment/welcome.shtml>
District of Columbia – <https://does.dcnetworks.org/InitialClaims/>
Florida –
<http://www.floridajobs.org/job-seekers-community-services/reemployment-assistance-center/file-a-claim>
Georgia – <http://www.dol.state.ga.us/>
Hawaii – <http://hawaii.gov/labor/ui>
Idaho – <http://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/Default.aspx?alias=labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl>
Illinois – <http://www.ides.state.il.us/individual/certify/default.asp>
Indiana – <http://www.in.gov/dwd/>
Iowa – <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/ui/file1.htm#1>.
Kansas – www.getkansasbenefits.gov
Kentucky – <http://www.kewes.ky.gov/>
Louisiana – https://laors.laworks.net/laclaims/Web_site/
Maine – <https://gateway.maine.gov/DOL/mics/BasePage.aspx>
Maryland – Electronic filing not permitted if employee worked for the Federal Government in the past 18 months. File by phone at 1-(410)-949-0022 in the Baltimore area, or -(800) 827-4839 outside the Baltimore area. Information is at
<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/unemployment.shtml>
Massachusetts – File initial claim by phone or in person only. File by phone at 1-(877)-626-6800 from Massachusetts, 1-(617)-626-6800 outside Massachusetts. Information is at
<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dlwdconstituent&L=2&L0=Home&L1=Claimants&sid=Edwd>
Michigan – <http://www.michigan.gov/uia/0,1607,7-118--77962--,00.html>
Minnesota – <http://www.uimn.org/>
Mississippi <http://mdes.ms.gov/unemployment-claims/>
Form must be submitted in person to a Mississippi Job Center
Missouri – <http://www.labor.mo.gov/DES/Claims/>
Montana – <https://app.mt.gov/ui4u/index>
Nebraska – <https://uibenefits.nwd.ne.gov/BPSWeb/jsp/BPSClaimantWelcome.jsp>
Nevada – http://www.ui.nvdetr.org/UI_Agreement.html
New Hampshire – <http://www.nh.gov/nhes/>
New Jersey – http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/ui/ui_index.html
New Mexico – <http://www.dws.state.nm.us/>
New York – https://ui.labor.state.ny.us/UBC/home.do?FF_LOCALE=1
North Carolina – <https://www.ncesc.com/individual/webInitialClaims/applyBegin.asp>

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

North Dakota – <https://secure.apps.state.nd.us/jsnd/uiiaclaims/login.htm>
Ohio – <http://unemployment.ohio.gov/>
Oklahoma – <https://unemployment.state.ok.us/instructions.asp?x=n>
Oregon – <http://findit.emp.state.or.us/ocs>
Pennsylvania – <https://www.paclaims.state.pa.us/UCEN/>
Puerto Rico - <http://www.trabajo.pr.gov/>
Rhode Island – <https://uicclaims.state.ri.us/RI-ICS/Intro/index.aspx?AC=yes>
South Carolina – <http://dew.sc.gov/>
South Dakota – <http://dlr.sd.gov/ui/default.aspx>
Tennessee – <http://www.state.tn.us/labor-wfd/esdiv.html>
Texas – <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/uicclaim.html>
Utah – <http://jobs.utah.gov/ui/WebInitialCubs/Welcome.aspx>
Vermont – File by phone only, by calling 1-877-214-3330. Information is at <http://www.labor.vermont.gov/Unemployed/tabid/109/Default.aspx>
Virginia – <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/seeker/jslogin.cfm>
Virgin Islands – File in-person only; contact information is listed at <http://www.vidol.gov/OP/Contact.htm>
Washington – <http://www.esd.wa.gov/uibenefits/index.php>
West Virginia – <http://www.wvuc.org/>
Wisconsin – <https://ucclaim-wi.org/InternetInitialClaims/InfoBasicRequirements.asp>
Wyoming - <https://doe.state.wy.us/InetClaims/>

Personnel Security

58. If the furlough impacts my ability to meet my financial obligations (e.g., mortgage or rent payments), will it impact my eligibility for continued Suitability for Federal employment, access to classified information, or to hold a sensitive position?

A furlough is a circumstance beyond your control. The Federal Adjudicative Guidelines specify that the adjudicative process is careful weighing of a number of variables known as the 'whole person concept'. Mitigating factors include whether the conditions that resulted in the concern were largely beyond the person's control and whether or not the individual acted responsibly under the circumstances.

<http://www.fas.org/irp/dni/icd/icpg704-2.pdf>

The link above is to the "Intelligence Community Police Guidance Number 704.2 Personnel Security Adjudicative Guidelines". Financial Considerations are discussed at pages A9-A10.

Relevant to Air Force employees is the following language:

"3. Conditions that could mitigate security concerns include: ...

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

b. The conditions that resulted in the financial problem were largely beyond the person's control (e.g., loss of employment, a business downturn...), and the individual acted responsibly under the circumstances;"

The DoD Central Adjudication Facility, AF Division reviews personnel security investigations to make a security clearance eligibility determination on all Air Force personnel, to include active duty, Air National Guard, Reserve, civilian personnel, and contractors requiring SCI eligibility for the Air Force.

Adjudicators follow the "whole-person" concept and look for patterns of irresponsibility. Financial distress caused by the furlough is not a "bad" indicator by itself. For example, if a subject has never had financial problems in the past, yet was behind on payments due to the furlough effect on income could be mitigated by condition above.

However, if the subject has a history of not meeting financial obligations documented from previous investigations and now has delinquent debt, there could be a pattern of financial irresponsibility that then requires mitigation.

In all cases, the person is provided an opportunity to provide mitigating information. What the Department CAFs are looking for is a "good faith effort" and proof of attempts to resolve the financial issues.

The furlough alone should not negatively impact an employee's security clearances.

Benefits (Continued)

59. To what extent does a non-pay status affect Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) coverage?

Coverage continues; however, if the furlough results in salary less than the health insurance premium amount, the employee's share will be withheld on return to full pay status.

60. Will an employee continue to be covered under the FEHB program if the agency is unable to make its premium payments on time?

Yes, the employee's FEHB coverage will continue even if an agency does not make the premium payments on time.

61. To what extent does a non-pay status affect FEGLI coverage?

Coverage continues; however, if furlough results in a salary less than the FEGLI premium amount, employee's share will be withheld on return to full salary.

62. What happens to an employee's TSP contributions?

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.

There will be a reduction in employee and employer contributions, unless the employee chose a set dollar amount vice percentage of pay.

63. Will the government matching contribution to TSP be reduced during the furlough period?

Government matching contributions determined by a percentage of an employee's basic pay may be stopped or reduced if the employee has no earnings, or if basic pay is reduced.

64. Can an employee take a TSP loan while furloughed?

Yes. By law, a TSP participant may take a TSP loan at any time when they are in a pay status.

65. What impact does the furlough have on an employee's loan payments?

Payments continue. If the employee's salary is insufficient, the loan may be extended or have a balloon payment at the end.

66. Can the Government take money from the TSP to resolve the financial situation?

No, the money in the TSP is held in trust for its participants. Neither Congress nor the Administration can take money from an employee's TSP account.

67. To what extent does non-pay status affect Flexible Spending Account (FSA) coverage?

Coverage continues; if salary is insufficient to cover required deductions, expenses are not reimbursed until allotments are successfully restarted.

68. To what extent does non-pay status affect LTC coverage?

Coverage continues; employee may be billed directly if payroll deductions cannot be taken.

69. To what extent does non-pay status affect FEDVIP coverage?

Coverage continues; employee may be billed directly if payroll deductions cannot be taken. Full employee contributions must be received to avoid dental and vision cancellation.

70. To what extent does non-pay status affect retirement coverage?

Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) coverage continue during an Administrative Furlough of 30 days or less.

71. Will social security contributions be affected?

Social security contributions are determined by a percentage of an employee's basic pay and may be stopped or reduced if the employee has no earnings or if basic pay is reduced.

This guidance must be adjusted for applicable collective bargaining agreements.